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COUNTRY

PALESTINS

DISSEMINATION NO. Report Number

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SLIPLINGT

Arab Personalities of Palustine III. Muhieddin el Busseini

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501065 (CID)

PLACE OF ORIGIN

Jerusalen

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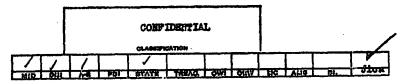
The following report is one of a series on Arab notables in Palestine. Other reports of this sories are A-14529 on Mass al Alemi and 501065 (CID accession number) on Hajj Amin el Husseini, and A-20798 on Arif el Arif. (/G-817)

Muhieddin Effondi, en Arab of Vision and pioneer banama-planter of Palestine, is about 80 years old, done the jubah and turbaned terboosh, has never been modern in aspect, but is most modern and far-seeing in vision. His education was limited.

1. About 1879 - 1880 he first bought land in the plain of Jeriche, along the southern bank of had el Kelt. He also purchased the springs of Fanuar and Dad ol Kelt in the rocky chasm of the latter name.

During the first years Muhieddin flooded bits of land, planted grain and vogotables, and irrigated with the winter overflow from the Relt. In drought years the Kelt dried up presenturely, and his crops failed - the rater supply was too insecure.

- 2. By 1915 he had obtained a clear title deed to the water in the Welt gorge and the tract of dese t south of the Wad ol Welt, from the foothills to the Jordan and : tretching nearly as far as the Usad Sea.
- A. There are remains of some six ancient aqueducts in the gorge. Muhieddin decided to repair one to give him a steady supply of water, summer as well as winter.
- B. Just prior to "World War One" Muhieddin borrowed 4000 gold pounds and invested most in imported cenent. The outbreak of war put a stop to importation, but nothing damated, he found two Greek comvents in the Jordan Velley had stocks of cement. With this he pushed on with the reconstruction.



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- C. At this time there were many deserters from the Turkish army, emong them Christian Arab and Armenian artisans. These he hired, fed and ledged in the mill or in the Greek Orthodox Convent of St. George. He fed as well a band of armed Turkish deserters, who protected them, and any officer who might have sought the deserters he kept"content".
- D. When his monoy gave out, he started dealing in wheat at Kerak in Transjordan, supplying it to the Turkish army, and made 4500 Turkish gold pounds, all of which, along with the income from the mill, was in turn invested in the aqueduct. From the income of small irrigated vegetable gardens around the mill, he maintained a large family dependent upon him.
 - B. The aquoduct was finally completed about the time of Allenby's occupation,
- 5. Soon afterthis Muhieddin affends started planting benemes on large tracts, Up till then the beneme was a rare fruit, grown only in small quantities in the orange groves of Jaffa and Jerieho.
- A. Then the plantation outgrow the water supply he extended the ognal up to Ain Peswar (the "bubbler") on intermittent spring, that may fail in drought years.
- 4. About this time Jerusalem had outgrown its old cistern and inadequate water supply piped in from Solomon's Pools Ain Farah. The municipality, disregarding Muhieddin's claims to the ownership of the Fewwar water, built 42 km, of road to the spring, and at a cost of EP 15,000, piped and pumped the water up to the them existing Ain Farah installation, where it was twice repumped to Jerusalem. During the second summer the Fewwar spring dried up, and a continuation of the pipelines was made down to the Wed el Melt spring. In recompense for half the water the Numicipality paid Suhieddin EP 8000 the first year, and EP 2500 the second.
- A. As soon as the first municipal contract was signed, Muhieddin Rffendi pushed a concrete canal from the end of his aquednot right to this far-flung groves, thus saving as much from waste as the Jorusulem Municipality was taking, so that his plantations did not suffer, nor did he have to restrict the area. Thus he was the first person in Palestine in modern times to construct and privately own an irrigating aquednot notable for its length, cost, and the vision behind it. Since them, Government and Jenish communal colonies have constructed other much advertised irrigating systems.
- B. With no wastage now through loakage and seepage, Muhieddin was able to irrigate 350 dummas of benama plantation, and succeeded in raising on a commercial scale, fruit which before that time had been largely luxury in Palestine.

His example has been widely followed, so that the Arabs of Palestine new com 5000 domains of benama plantations, mostly in the lower Jordan Valley, with an addition of 1100 on the Transjordan side of the Valley. Likewise the Jows, mostly the Ribbuts settlements around Galilee, the Middle Jordan Valley, and less in the Coastal Plain, own another 2500 domains, a total of 6400 domains.

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yielding a yearly average erop of 6800 tons, valued at & 150,000.

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